

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor laser device comprising:
an active layer;
a lower cladding layer located on a first side of said active layer;
a first upper cladding layer located on a second side of said active layer, the second side being opposite the first side of the active layer;
an etching stopper layer located at said first upper cladding layer on the second side of said active layer; and
a second upper cladding layer located opposite said etching stopper layer, on the second side of said active layer, and including a stripe protrusion, in which a stripe light-guiding channel is located between said protrusion and said etching stopper layer, wherein
said etching stopper layer is a single layer of a material including a chemical element ~~different in composition from materials~~ the chemical elements of each of said lower, first upper, and second upper cladding layers, and has a refractive index within a range that is $\pm 5\%$ of refractive index of each of said lower, first upper, and second upper cladding layers.

2. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 1, wherein said active layer contains GaInP, each of said lower, first upper, and second upper cladding layers contains AlGaInP, and said etching stopper layer contains $\text{Al}_x\text{Ga}_{1-x}\text{As}$, where $0 < x < 1$.

3. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 2, wherein x is at least 0.45.

4. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor laser device comprising:
an active layer;

a lower cladding layer located on a first side of said active layer;
a first upper cladding layer located on a second side of said active layer, the second side being opposite the first side of the active layer; and
a second upper cladding layer located ~~at~~ on and in contact with said first upper cladding layer, on the second side of said active layer, and including a stripe protrusion, in which a stripe light-guiding channel is located between said protrusion and said second upper cladding layer, wherein said second upper cladding layer is a material different from material of said first upper cladding layer, and has a refractive index within a range $\pm 5\%$ refractive index of said first upper cladding layer.

5. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 4, wherein said active layer contains GaInP, each of said lower cladding layer and said first upper cladding layer contains AlGaInP, and said second upper cladding layer contains $\text{Al}_x\text{Ga}_{1-x}\text{As}$, where $0 < x < 1$.

6. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 5, wherein x is at least 0.45.

7. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 2, wherein x is no more than 0.9.

8. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 7, wherein x is ~~approximately~~ 0.7.

9. (Previously Presented) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 6, wherein x is no more than 0.9.

10. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 9, wherein x is ~~approximately~~ 0.7.